

Life in the Hospital

An extra-special guest post [hoisted from comments!](#)

The very walls of the hospital seemed to suck the life out of me—painted in puke yellow—and the window, which did look out at some trees, unfortunately framed a week’s worth of grey, rainy weather. The floors and walls were filthy (I won’t even mention the bathroom); the furniture old, chipped and stained; the framed artwork (like an old puzzle drawing out of Boy’s Life magazine with faces and animals and broomsticks hiding in the trees) faded; the food rancid, stinky and inedibly heavy and overly sweet. I seldom saw the doctors wash their hands or use the Purell dispenser on the wall (I began to fear catching some super hospital germ infection). When I could finally walk the halls in my hideous hospital gowns and infantilizing slipper socks, I was tethered to a top-heavy pole with bad wheels, which made dragging it over any bumps or turning corners an exercise in futility. I begged to be let out, to be sent home where it was clean, where I could have simple healthy food and take a shower; I begged the residents, the doctors (when they came on rounds) to take the tubes out of me. And they just made me feel idiotic, patronized, weak and helpless.

Finally, in the middle of one sleepless, endless night spent staring at the walls, being sure the clock was actually moving backwards, it occurred to me with perfect clarity that the patient is never going to win the battle with the doctors...because the doctors have all the weapons. Just then the door slammed open, yet another nurse threw on all the lights and jabbed me with a needle, filling me with some other substance she refused to identify. Oh god, it was the most horrible hospital experience I have ever been through. And the scariest part of it is that this hospital is on the list of the 100 Best Hospitals in Illinois. Imagine what the others not on the list are like.

[...]

My brother has a theory. You go into a hospital to have something fixed but they immediately take you totally out of your normal environment: off your normal food and caffeine, off all your regular medications, etc. They do the surgery (or whatever) and invade your body with all sorts of foreign substances (IVs, narcotics, oxygen, TPNs, blood thinners, insulin, etc.) Then, as they gradually withdraw the foreign substances they have assaulted you with, they declare you “cured.” Then you are eventually allowed to go back home and resume your normal routine. Odd.

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